

# UrbanPromise Ministries

Volunteer Orientation Manual

Updated: May 2010

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## A Brief Introduction to UrbanPromise Ministries

### Our History

UrbanPromise Vancouver (UPV) began in 1997 with the merging of two separate visions. First, God prepared a Board consisting of local business people, clergy and others with connections to the work already happening with UrbanPromise in Camden, NJ. Their initial goal was to raise funds and support, as well as to recruit and train Interns to serve in Camden.

Around the same time, three Canadians working with UrbanPromise in Camden, NJ began to envision bringing a UP-style program back to Vancouver. Jo Friesen, a UP Camden Site Director, and Jeff & Nadia VanderKuip, Interns serving a one-year internship, felt God was calling them to move “home” and minister to the children of East Vancouver.

God brought these two groups together in early 1997, and the newly formed Board agreed to take on the task of overseeing a program development as well. Jo, Jeff & Nadia moved back to Vancouver in September 1997.

After nine months of community surveys, prayer and planning, UPV launched its first program. Camp Peace started in July 1998, running out of the First Christian Reformed Church. That first summer we also welcomed two StreetLeaders from Camden and a local college student to serve as our first Interns.

Camp Peace continued on into the fall with an AfterSchool Program three days a week. A second site, Camp Grace, started up in February 1999. Both programs eventually developed into five-day-a-week programs. A third site, this one in the Whalley area of Surrey, began with a Summer Day Camp in 2003. A fourth site, Camp Joy, operated downtown from 2005-2009.

As the children’s programs grew, so did the other programs that intertwine with them. In September 1999 we hosted our first Academic Year Interns. We have continued to host Interns from around the globe (Canada, US, Germany, UK, Australia, New Zealand) for both year-round and summer internships. Along the way, we also started welcoming WorkGroups for short-term mission opportunities and bringing on local adults as regular volunteers.

The StreetLeader Program began in the summer of 1999 when we hired six local youth to help out in our programs. It has since grown into a well-rounded year-round program that works with 50-60 teens annually. In 2002, we began a separate program, called Jr. StreetLeaders, for 8<sup>th</sup> graders transitioning from “camper” to “leader”. From 2005-2009, we also ran a Jr. High program called GAP – which focused on providing additional activities and leadership for our Grade 5-7 age group.

## Our Mission

UrbanPromise supports and nurtures children, youth and young adults in under-resourced neighbourhoods, seeking to encourage their long-term academic, social, spiritual, leadership and personal development by modeling healthy relationships, offering diverse opportunities, providing a variety of creative programs and sharing the principles of the Christian faith.

## Overview of UrbanPromise Vancouver

### Our Programs

UrbanPromise Vancouver is currently working in six program areas:

1. AfterSchool Programs (Gr. 1- 7)
2. Summer Day Camps (Gr. 1-7)
3. StreetLeaders (Gr. 9-12)
4. Interns (18 – 25 years old)
5. WorkGroups (High School & College age)
6. GAP (Gr. 5-7) & Jr. SL (Gr. 8)

### AfterSchool Programs

High energy, affordable, after school care designed to support children and their families in inner city neighbourhoods.

*These programs provide:*

- A safe place for elementary school-aged children to have their academic, physical, emotional and spiritual needs met in a caring Christian environment
- A positive, constructive alternative for children who might otherwise be on their own after school due to their parents' schedules
- Tutoring, homework assistance, recreation, social interaction, Bible lessons, healthy snacks and creative activities

### Summer Day Camps

Exciting, yet low-cost Summer Day Camps that run in inner-city neighbourhoods for 6 weeks in July and August.

*These programs provide:*

- A fun, safe, caring environment
- Day trips to places such as SplashDown Water Park, A Rocha, Science World and the beach
- Activities such as recreation, art, cooking, reading and Bible

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### StreetLeaders

Innovative job training and leadership skill development for local teens with an emphasis on practical experience and friendship.

*StreetLeaders provide:*

- Friendship for the children
- Positive role models
- Connection with the wider community
- Leadership and support for our AfterSchool Programs and Summer Day Camps, where they teach classes and lead group activities

*StreetLeaders receive:*

- Peer and adult mentoring for their spiritual and life journeys
- Scholarships opportunities for further education

### Interns

Stretching, challenging, hard work, unbelievably rewarding—just a few words used to describe our year-round and summer opportunities for young men and women.

*Interns:*

- Live in community in an urban environment
- Lead classes & activities in our AfterSchool Programs and Summer Day Camps
- Volunteer in schools & community programs
- Model good decision making and positive choices
- Generate meaningful friendships with the children and their families

### WorkGroup Program

Short term missions opportunities of one day, several days or a week for youth, college and church groups of 5-15 people.

*Workgroups:*

- Participate in our AfterSchool Programs and Summer Day Camps
- Bring new energy to these programs
- Provide much needed behind the scenes support

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### Our Staff

UrbanPromise is primarily a volunteer organization with only a handful of program staff. These include:

#### **Executive Director – Judy Christopherson**

Judy oversees all of the UrbanPromise Ministries in Vancouver. She is also our primary fund-raiser, promoter, and cheerleader!

#### **Ministry Director – Sarah Dykman** ([sarah@urbanpromise.ca](mailto:sarah@urbanpromise.ca))

Sarah is responsible for overseeing and coordinating all of the UP programs in Vancouver.

#### **Camp Directors –**

**Jenny Toews** ([jenny@urbanpromise.ca](mailto:jenny@urbanpromise.ca)) (Camp Peace Director – First Christian Reformed)

**Katrina Stock** ([katrina@urbanpromise.ca](mailto:katrina@urbanpromise.ca)) (Camp Peace Assistant Director)

**Tanya Tam** ([tanya@urbanpromise.ca](mailto:tanya@urbanpromise.ca)) (Camp Grace Director – Grandview Calvary Baptist)

**Natalie Rutherford** ([natalie@urbanpromise.ca](mailto:natalie@urbanpromise.ca)) (Camp Hope Director – Whalley Presbyterian)

Our Camp Directors are dedicated to providing an educational and spiritual atmosphere for the many children to come to our After School Programs and Summer Day Camps. In addition, they oversee the Interns and volunteers who help run the programs at their site.

#### **Administrator – Cheryl Enns**

Cheryl oversees general office operations. She also will help you to manage all the little details involved in getting to UrbanPromise, getting your support letters written, etc.

#### **StreetLeader Director – Diedre R. Sportack**

Diedre coordinates and runs the StreetLeader Program. StreetLeaders are local youth who gain valuable leadership and job experience while volunteering in our programs.

#### **Interns, WorkGroups & Volunteers – Coral Scott** ([coral@urbanpromise.ca](mailto:coral@urbanpromise.ca))

Coral oversees the Intern staff. She is responsible for recruiting, training, supporting and giving spiritual guidance to the Interns. She also recruits and manages the WorkGroups and adult volunteers.

#### **Communications Director – Jo Friesen**

One of the founding staff members of UrbanPromise and our former Ministry Director, Jo now works part-time as our communications director. She ensures our website stays up to date, as well as putting together all of our newsletter and PR materials.

### Our Team

In addition to our long-term staff, there are many other important members of our team including:

#### Volunteers

Most of the people at UrbanPromise are volunteers who come from around the globe and whose numbers vary at any one time throughout the year. They consist of the following:

#### Academic Year Interns (AY Interns)

Full-time workers/volunteers who commit themselves for nine months to receive training in urban ministry. This is accomplished through participation in running youth clubs, after school tutoring programs, and Bible Studies, as well as, academic reflection on urban and theological issues.

#### Summer Interns

Full-time workers/volunteers who commit themselves for the intense summer months of July and August to run Summer Day Camps, through which they also learn about the urban and theological issues.

#### StreetLeaders

These are local youth who volunteer in our programs as a part of our leadership development and job training program. Many of these teens were once children in our programs and they all serve as positive role models for our kids and in the community.

#### WorkGroups

WorkGroups are usually church youth groups or college fellowship groups who come for the time of one day to one week to carry out any specific tasks required at the time of their visit. These tasks could include physical labor to giving leadership in the Camp Program.

#### Local Volunteers

Individuals, young and old, who come when they can to help out the staff and Interns with specific tasks or overall support.

#### Board of Directors

Individuals who have committed themselves to upholding the vision of UrbanPromise and to assist in decision-making and providing resources for the staff. This is a very diverse group of individuals who love and support the ministry.

## Expectations and Responsibilities

### Expectations

- I. Your time is valuable and we want to work with you to help you reach your full potential as a volunteer. Some ways that you can help:
  - **If you have any concerns regarding the children or staff, please bring it to the attention of the Site Director immediately.** This can include anything from how to connect with a child, to a concern you have about a child's academics, to something that you don't understand about the schedule or a desire to modify the role you are playing.
  - **Be honest about your gifts and the role that you would like to play at camp.** While we may not be able to accommodate every special request, we believe the most effective volunteers are the ones who fit comfortably into the role, rather than those who are pushed into one.
  - **Ask questions – but be sensitive about when!** We work in an environment where everyone is learning this makes it challenging for all of us. If there are things you don't understand, or something that you need clarified, please ask. Just keep in mind that if ten kids are asking for help with their homework at the same time, you might not get the attention from the staff that you were hoping for.
  - **Take initiative.** Most of the time we will try to have a specific role/activity planned for you to participate in and we will try to be clear about our expectations. However, there are certain to be days and moments when nothing goes as planned and finding something for a volunteer to do is just one more stressful thing for our staff to think about. In those times, feel free to offer to take on an obvious task (doing dishes, helping a child who needs some one-on-one time, reading to a child who is restless, etc.) or recognize that just your presence in the room may be what is most needed at that time.
  - **We assume that if there is an adult in the room, they are willing and able to be in authority.** It is important for us to know both staff members and volunteers are ready and willing to intervene with the children when needed.
  - **Be involved.** Plan to dive into activities and opportunities whenever they arise and to help the children do the same.
  - **Be patient.** There are a number of children in our programs that can be quite “trying”. They are kids who need long-term academic, social and spiritual support and there are usually no quick solutions to the difficulties they encounter and cause. We are in it for the long haul with them and there are many ups and downs along the way. It helps to keep your eyes on the big picture because the day to day can be discouraging.
  - **Your specific responsibilities will vary depending on the site where you work and the role that you take at that site.** Please take the time to clarify with your Site Director,

and any other staff with whom you might directly work, what your specific responsibilities will be.

- **Support each other.** It is important to us that the children see a united, consistent “front” from the staff and volunteers. We need to work together to support each other’s decisions (even if you need to ask for clarification later) and to back each other up. Often the children like to play one adult against another, especially when one of them is new. If you are uncertain about what a child is asking to do or have, be sure to clarify with one of the staff.
2. It is important that you check in with the Site Director as soon as you arrive. This ensures that they know you are on site and available and give them an opportunity to give you new or different instructions for the day. If the Site Director is unavailable, be sure that you check in with one of the other staff.
  3. It is also important that you let your Site Director know when you are leaving. Even if you always leave at the same time, they need to know who is on site and who is not.
  4. Volunteers are most valuable to us when we know when they are coming and can be prepared for them. While we understand that schedules change, it is very important that you let us know if you will not be able to make a shift or need to change the time or date of your shift.
  5. In the event of a medical emergency, there are staff members at each site who are qualified in First Aid. It is important that they are called on to deal with any medical concerns. If you are qualified in First Aid, let your Site Director know so that they will know that you can be called upon if needed.
  6. For security reasons, children are only dismissed to their parents or known care-givers. Please ensure that you do not allow a child to leave with any adult, or on their own, unless you have received confirmation from a staff member that they are allowed to do so.
  7. Please do not let strangers into the building, or let adults you don’t know “wander” around the church on their own. If you are uncertain about someone, stay with them until you can find the Site Director or a staff member.
  8. If you see or hear anything from or about a child that causes you concern, please speak to the Site Director as soon as possible, even if you are uncertain about whether or not it is serious.

## Daily schedule

The daily schedule varies from Camp to Camp and sometimes from one day to another. Once you are assigned to a Camp, your Site Director will go over a specific schedule with you, as well as your role during each of the parts of the day. What follows is a general description of the components of the daily schedule and some information regarding how you can be an effective volunteer during each part of the day.

### Site Set-up

Each site has different needs and spaces to set up each day. Some days there may be lots to do, while other days it may just involve preparing snack. Having a well prepared site is important for classroom management and discipline, so extra hands before the children arrive are often helpful.

### School Pick-ups

At some of our sites, staff members pick up the children from local schools. Extra adult supervision is always welcome. If you do join the staff on school pick-ups, make sure you speak with them about expectations and how you can be most helpful. The best way for us to keep the children safe on route is by being consistent, so it is important that you are clear about expectations during this time.

### Playtime

This is an opportunity to hang out and have fun with the kids. Depending on the weather, they will either all be inside, or the kids will have the choice of inside or outside. One of the staff will be available to supervise each area, but it is always better if there are extra helpers. Sometimes there are organized activities, other times the children are free to make their own choices. Some things to keep in mind during playtime:

- This is often the time of the day when volunteers arrive. It is usually hectic and the Site Director's focus is on many things. Rather than waiting to be assigned an area, just dive in and find some kids to hang out with. Take into consideration how many kids are in each area, and where help might be needed. For instance, if there are 30 kids outside and 4 inside, go outside to help, rather than staying in with the few kids.
- Supervision is very important during this time, as most of the major behaviour problems we end up with are a result of a minor misbehaviours going unnoticed or unchecked. If you're not sure how to respond to a situation, get one of the staff. You need to be ready to intervene at all times – even if it is just to stop something from continuing. If you “let things go” during playtime, the kids will not take your authority seriously later.
- It is very important that the children are supervised at all times. If you are the only adult in a space supervising children, don't leave that space unless another adult comes to take over. If you need help, send an older child to get one of the staff.
- Keep an eye on the clock and keep kids informed on how much time they have left. When the call comes to clean up, help them, but don't do it for them. Try to keep them on schedule.
- Ask enough questions so that you understand what is allowed during playtime and what isn't so that you will feel prepared.

### Snack and Opening Program

Each day the children receive a snack before they begin their homework. How snack is distributed varies from Camp to Camp, but usually there is a need for help with passing it out, keeping kids focused so that they finish their snack on time, and with clean-up. This is also a good time for you to interact with the kids relationally to try and get to know them better.

Some of the Camps also have an opening program time, when all of the kids are brought together to participate in singing, games, or skits. It is usually a fun way to kick off the day and set the tone for the afternoon.

- Active participation and enthusiasm are key for volunteers during this time. This is usually a loud, boisterous time and the kids will take their cues from the adults. Jump in and have fun!
- If you are more of a “behind the scenes” person, there may be things such as putting out snack or washing dishes that you can do to help make the transition time better for everyone.

### Bible Time

Each day the children participate in a Bible activity. This could be a story, a devotional or a Bible game. The goal is to introduce the children to the Bible, to who God is and to what a relationship with Jesus could mean to them.

- If you have some interest in teaching Bible to the kids, talk with the Site Director about how you could get involved and be more hands-on during that time.
- Often the teacher will need support to keep the kids quiet and participating. The best way to do this is to listen to the teacher and to follow their lead on what the kids need to do.

### Homework Time

A significant portion of each day is set aside for the kids to complete their school assigned homework and work on enrichment activities. You may be assigned to work with a specific child one-on-one, or to provide general assistance in a classroom. Some things to keep in mind:

- Watch for kids with their hands up and help them get settled with what they need. If you can't find something, ask one of the staff. The sooner everyone gets settled, the less stressful the time is for everyone.
- The kids need to stay in their chairs, and in the room, as much as possible. Ask questions in order to understand how the classroom works, so that you are consistent with what the staff assigned to their class is doing with them.
- The kids need to be kept as quiet as possible. They should only be talking if they are discussing their homework or the classroom teacher has given them permission. They have other times during the day when they can socialize. Usually just having an adult there is the best way to make sure kids stay focused, but you may also have to remind them and encourage them to stay on task.

- If you are helping children with their homework, make sure you are helping them find/discover/learn the answer and not just giving them the answer. If you aren't sure how to help them, see if another kid from their class is available or ask one of the staff.
- Please make sure that you are not distracting kids when they should be working. Again, there are opportunities to socialize and get to know the kids at other times.
- Depending on the age and the level of need of the children, helping them one-on-one can range from needing to be very proactive with them (helping them work through every question) to needing to simply be a presence that keeps them on task. Some kids simply need someone to sit with them in order to focus, even if they don't need actual academic help.

### Option/Elective Time

Again, depending on the Camp and the day, this time will take a lot of different forms. Some days the kids may all play a game together, other days the children may get to choose between different classes. The goal during this time is to have the children participate and experience some kind of learning in a more "hands on" or active environment.

- If you don't receive specific direction from the staff during this time, again go with the group that has the most kids per staff. Usually someone will try to give you some direction, but that's not always possible in the midst of the day.
- During this time, just take your cues from the staff. If the kids are supposed to be quiet, help keep them quiet, if they are supposed to sing, sing along etc. If you work with the same group consistently, spend time clarifying with the staff what would be most helpful.
- There are often children who continue to need homework assistance during this time, so your Site Director may assign you to this role.
- This is a great time for you to share your own skills/talents with the kids. Talk with your Site Director about this time as there are open opportunities for you to be the one "teaching" the children during this time.
- There is lots of flexibility!

### Clean-Up/Kids Home

Please let one of the staff know when you are leaving so that they know who is still in the building. Again, make sure you don't leave kids unattended even if you really need to go. One of the staff will always relieve you if you have to go.

- If you can stick around after the program finishes, there is always clean up that needs to be done and any extra help is appreciated.

### Classroom management

Good classroom management is a combination of preparation, set-up, atmosphere, incentives and takes into account learning styles and the specific needs of the children in the room. In general, our team members are given freedom to develop their own style of classroom management that best suits their personality and meets the needs of the children. However, they are often still learning and developing that style, so as a volunteer, it will be important for you to make sure that you are on the “same page” with them and have an understanding of what they are trying to accomplish so that you can be a consistent support in the classroom.

Some general ideas to keep in mind:

- We are ‘hands-off’ with kids. That means no piggyback rides, no kids on your lap and no roughhousing. Some kids can take it and some are too sensitive. We also don’t know how each individual family feels about it.
- Often the kids see things like piggyback rides as ‘favoritism’. If a child does try to sit on your lap, just gently have them sit beside you.
- Positive physical touch can be very important to a child, but should be initiated by the child. Some of our children come from situations where even the most innocent touch is a cause for concern for them.
- Remember that you are the adult and the role model. Kids will look at your behaviour and it will tell them more than words about how they should behave. If you are impatient and short-tempered, talking during a time when you should be quiet, or not taking the requests of other staff seriously, the kids will pick up on that and do it too.
- For the most part, discipline in terms of strikes, time-outs etc should be left to the full-time team members; however, we want you to feel empowered to provide positive reinforcement and to intervene with natural consequences for minor behavioural issues. Occasionally, when you are on your own with a group of kids, the Site Director or an intern might empower you to give time-outs or strikes. Otherwise, if a child continues to disobey you, please let one of the Site Director or an intern know and they will deal with it.
- Once you are more familiar with the kids and the classroom structure, the staff may rely on you more in this area.

### Discipline strategies

- Participate in activities, instruction and clean-up
- Treat one another with kindness and respect
- Treat teachers and counselors with kindness and respect

As a leadership staff we have discussed and prayed about the issue of discipline and how we can best help children in this area, and how we can show the kids the love of Christ while keeping chaos and out of control behavior to a minimum.

### Here is the plan!

- We want to first approach each day, each class, and each situation with **prayer**. The things we encounter will likely be beyond our wisdom, our patience, our experience and our knowledge. We will need God.
- We want to focus on being **pro-active** instead of reactive. That means we interact with the kids before they misbehave. We encourage them and give them the attention they need before they need to do something wrong to get it. We are actively involved at all times. We are watching for the smallest signs that something else may be coming and stepping in to prevent it from happening.
- We want to take responsibility that we **set the tone** for the class and the group. If we are excited, kind, encouraging and caring, so will be most of the children. If we are tired, grouchy, sarcastic and complaining, the children will respond in kind as well.
- We want to first **focus on the positive** – in one another and the kids. Rather than acknowledging and identifying every minor negative behavior, we want to encourage and applaud the good behavior we see.
- We want all of the Interns and the StreetLeaders to know that they have **authority** to sort things out. We will need to support each other in this area. They are also responsible to do so in a loving, caring, gentle, patient manner. We will need to hold each other accountable in this area.
- We want all of the Interns and the StreetLeaders to remember that they are the **older ones**. They need to remember not to take poor behavior personally or to respond in a like manner.

We have identified three different levels of unacceptable behavior and three different means for handling it:

- **Minor incidences – no harm is done to anyone else, only one or two children are involved.**
  - Depending on the type of situation, there are two responses. The first is to deal with deal with the behavior by rewarding and praising other children involved in the same area who are exhibiting the correct behavior. Remember, this isn't just ignoring misbehavior – it is giving the attention to the children who are behaving properly instead of to the children who are not. The second method is to provide immediate natural consequence for the misbehavior, and then to move on. If the child refuses to accept the consequences, the minor incident may become a major incident and need to be dealt with accordingly.

- **Major incidences – anything that is physically or emotionally harming to someone else or disturbs the entire class**
  - Be certain you are not responding to the child in frustration or anger, and therefore providing a major consequence for a minor incident. Each director will be establishing a plan for your team to deal with major incidences. It may be similar to our past 3 strike system, but pay attention to changes that they have made to make the system better fit your team and their leadership style.
  - Dealing with major incidences will almost always involve a time-out. The time out usually serves one (or more) of four purposes.
    - **It allows the child themselves time to calm down and bring themselves under control.** If a child is unable to calm down during their time-out, it is best to bring the director into the situation rather than taking them back to class where they are likely to misbehave again.
    - **It allows the teacher the opportunity to bring the class back under control, without the child or children who caused the disturbance in their midst.** It usually works best to have the time-out occur outside the classroom – but only if the child can still be observed during the time-out. It will also be important to bring the child back into the classroom with as little interruption as possible.
    - **It allows the counselor the opportunity to sort out an incident that involved more than one child, and/or to discuss why the behavior was inappropriate.**  
Whenever possible, a time-out should include having one of the counselors discuss the situation with the child. It is important to make sure they understand why they are on time-out, which rule of the camp they aren't following and then to help them articulate what they could do differently next time.
    - **It can be a natural consequence as it can involve the child missing out on an activity that they enjoy.** Be careful that children aren't trying to get time-outs in order to miss a class they don't like. If you suspect this is occurring, discuss it with your director as it may work better to provide them with a 'detention' type timeout where they miss an activity they do like later, rather than one they want to get out of.
- **Mega incidences – Intentional, intense physical or emotional harming to someone else or completely out of control behavior (absolute refusal to listen)**
  - In this situation, the child needs to be immediately removed and taken to the director. If they refuse to go, another dependable child needs to be sent to get the director. Further discipline is at the discretion of the director.

We want the kids to know that things are “new every morning”. It's hard to let go of the past, but we want to wisely put it behind us so each child is treated equally and fairly. We do want to remember the past, however, so we can make better decisions in our own pro-active behavior.

## Keeping Track

My site:	
My Site Director:	
My Site Director's phone number(s):	
The Intern(s) with whom I will be working:	
The StreetLeader(s) with whom I will be working:	
My job(s):	
The children with whom I will be working:	
Other information I need:	

### My Time Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday